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**DATE:** December 12, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Libya Weekly Update

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Below is a summary of the latest top headlines of the week surrounding the news in Libya. Key highlights include:

- **Russian Influence in Libya:** Russia continues to undermine Libyan stability, deploying mercenary troops on the ground in Libya. GNA officials plan to release a list of 600-800 Putin-connected mercenaries to the Russian government in an attempt to cease their involvement. If Russia is successful in their efforts, they will further destabilize Libya, create more violence, and allow for terrorism to rise in North Africa.
- **Haftar:** Against international calls for peace, General Haftar now believes his army, with support from international proxies and in violations of UN directives, along with Russian, Chadian, and Sudanese fighters, will “enter” Tripoli by the end of the year. His offensive has led to countless civilian deaths, and a further chasm in an already unstable country.
- **Terrorism on the Rise:** A recent UN report notes the rise in terrorism in Libya, which ISIS officials believe can serve as an axis for their future operations. This instability is a direct result of the offensive by General Haftar, which is increasingly influenced by Russian technical expertise and manpower.
- **GNA Protects Tripoli:** As the offensive has unfolded, the GNA has been steadfast in protecting Tripoli. A recent report noted that the GNA has successfully shot down or destroyed on the ground 15 of General Haftar’s warplanes since the start of the offensive in April.

**Associated Press (12/5):** [Libyan officials collect evidence of Russian fighters in war](#)

- GNA officials plan to confront Russia over the deployment of mercenaries into Libya that are fighting for General Haftar.
- There are 600-800 documented Russian fighters in Libya, and this list of names will be presented to the Russian Government.

**Foreign Policy (12/5):** [With the Help of Russian Fighters, Libya’s Haftar Could Take Tripoli](#)

- Russia is currently working to tip the scale in the Libya crisis, and undermining US regional influence.
- The US has since condemned the war and General Haftar, which has been the most forceful statement currently made.
- If Russia is successful, this will produce an even more violent Libya, militia firmament will continue, and unity would not exist. Haftar would rule much like previous dictators and not coalesce Libya. This weakened state would allow for terrorism to continue to rise.

**Bloomberg (12/9):** [Haftar to Enter Tripoli by New Year in ‘Final’ Battle, Ally Says](#)

- General Haftar is making plan to enter Tripoli by the end of the year according to his allies.

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- Backed by Russian mercenaries, Haftar believes his offensive will be successful, even though the international community has called for him to stop his attacks.
- There have been at least 1,000 Russian mercenaries contracted by the Wagner Group on the ground in Libya since September in attempt to tip the scale of the war.

Associated Press (12/10): [UN Experts: Libya Is New Focus of Islamic State Extremists](#)

- Experts at the UN indicate that the interference of Chadian and Sudanese fighters in Libya are a direct threat to stability in the country.
- A leader of the Islamic State has declared that Libya is one of the main axes of its future operations. This is in turn to the lack of stability in the country.
- These Sudanese and Chadian fighters join along with Russian mercenaries on the ground to fight alongside General Haftar's LNA.

Libya Observer (12/9): [Haftar's forces lost 15 aircraft since the start of Tripoli offensive](#)

- Since the beginning of his offensive, General Haftar has lost 15 warplanes.
- The GNA has successfully dealt with incoming attacks on Tripoli, and has worked to neutralize some of Haftar's assets.

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